

Fiber optics—A clear choice for UGP

A UGP crew adds armor rod and connecting wire to the steel splice-point of the old overhead groundwire and the new optical groundwire to ensure it pulls successfully through the next traveler on the Garrison-Bismarck line. Western's UGP crews are modernizing the transmission system using fiber optics. Regional Communications Engineer **Ray Kub** said, "When it came time to replace the analog microwave radio system, we decided to go with fiber optics. The choice between a fiber optic system, with a projected

lifetime of 40 years, and a digital microwave system, with a lifetime of 15 years, seemed obvious. Fiber systems are more expensive, but the benefits of reduced maintenance and a longer lifetime are substantial tradeoffs." The entire change-out project for UGP should be completed in about 10 years. **(Photos by Leo Wandler)**

